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Agenda item 2 (b)

PREPARATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE BASIS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/228 AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT OTHER RELEVANT GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS: RECENT ACTIONS OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND OTHER BODIES OF RELEVANCE TO THE PREPARATORY PROCESS

Letter dated 22 August 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

I have the honour to transmit the text of the Tunis Declaration on the Environment, which the Ministers of the Environment of States and Governments that make use of French adopted on 23 April 1991.

I should be grateful if you would circulate this text as an official document at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, being held in Geneva, from 12 to 30 August 1991.

(Signed): Alioune Sene
Permanent Representative of Senegal
to the United Nations Office at Geneva

The Tunis Declaration on the Environment

The Ministers of the Environment and the environmental authorities of States and Governments that make use of French, meeting in Tunis on 22 and 23 April 1991, representing countries which, by their geographical extent, cover the most varied ecological systems in Europe, North America, the Caribbean, the Mediterranean Basin, Africa, Asia, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific,

Recall the resolution adopted in Dakar in May 1989 by their Heads of State and Government, in which they undertake to promote sustainable development,

Emphasize their will to fulfil this commitment, which links the environmental concerns of each country with those of the planet and the objectives of protection with those of development, by securing the well-being of present generations without jeopardizing that of future generations,

Affirm their aspiration to universal respect for the environment, to greater solidarity, and their attachment to the environmental rights and obligations of States and populations, reflecting the values of the communities of the French-speaking area,

Express the will to plan their action with respect for their cultural diversity,

Mindful of the imperative need for each State and Government concerned to define its environmental policy, affirm their support for and adherence to the following fundamental principles:

The right of persons to enjoy a beneficial environment;

The participation of the population in the environmental decision-making process;

The duty of prevention and preparedness;

The need to evaluate the impact on the environment, including transboundary impact, at each stage of development;

The responsibility of those who harm the environment;

Each country's obligation to take the requisite measures to prevent pollution of the environment of other States;

The application of the polluter-pays principle;

Making the user of natural resources aware of his responsibilities;

The utilization of renewable resources in accordance with the practices and norms of sustainability,

Recognizing that environmental degradation, combined with the deterioration in the terms of trade and population pressure in developing countries is both the cause and the consequence of poverty, mindful moreover, of the constraints that indebtedness imposes on development policies, affirm their solidarity:

In undertaking to mobilize, as far as possible, the additional resources needed in developing countries to cope with the overall threats to the environment;

In adopting the principle of debt-for-nature swap and promoting this principle in appropriate international bodies, so as to redirect maximum resources towards environmental protection in developing countries;

In favouring better control of urban growth, in harmony with rural development, sound littoral and marine environment management, and the struggle against regional disparities;

In ensuring observance of international and regional conventions, including those concerning hazardous wastes and ocean pollution, and in cooperating in their implementation,

Decide to work to achieve the following actions:

To devise and implement national environmental action plans, necessary conditions for sustainable development, and to this end, to mobilize national and international resources;

To contribute to the solution of worldwide and regional problems by actively participating in current and future work concerning them;

To allocate, jointly, at least 5 per cent of their territories to safeguard their heritage for the purpose of favouring ecosystem conservation and species diversity in the context of sustainable development;

To strengthen national environmental agencies;

To support policies for sound management of the heritage and, in particular, of rare natural resources;

To cooperate in the control and transfer of environmentally sensitive technologies;

To institute a notification and consultation procedure in cases where the environment of another State is likely to be affected by a development project;

To improve the conditions for participation by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and decentralized or local authorities;

To encourage the introduction in school syllabuses and university curricula of environment-development courses, to help in the preparation of programmes designed to heighten public awareness, to inform and to train the population, planners and decision-makers and to promote research and studies;

Undertake to strengthen their cooperation with the United Nations system, more particularly from the standpoint of the World Conference on the Environment and Development in 1992 and of international conventions and agreements prepared in this context;

Are heedful of the various world and regional bodies concerned and all those which are or could be engaged in negotiations connected with the environment;

Adopt the first Plan of Action, annexed to this Declaration.